## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A procurement system for purchasing a special item, comprising:

a buyer for purchasing the special item;

a supplier for supplying the special item to said buyer;

a fulfillment organization for communicating between said buyer and said supplier;

a database associated with said fulfillment organization;

a special requisition; and

updated information, wherein said updated information is obtained in part from said special requisition and added to said database for future reference.

2. A procurement system as recited in claim 1, wherein said database of said organization comprises a knowledge base and a catalog database, said catalog database containing catalog item information normalized with respect to predetermined relationships in accordance with predetermined rules stored within said knowledge base.

3. A procurement system as recited in claim 2, wherein said special requisition is partially normalized according to said predetermined rules, with said buyer suggesting enhancements to said predetermined relationships for creating a potential unique description of the special item.

4. A procurement system as recited in claim 3, wherein said special requisition is reviewed by said supplier and includes a proposed modification to at least one of said predetermined relationships. .

5. A procurement system as recited in claim 4, including a new predetermined rule to uniquely identify the special item, said new predetermined rule based at least in part on said updated information contained within said special requisition.

6. A procurement system as recited in claim 4, wherein a plurality of said suppliers reviewed said special requisition and said fulfillment organization normalized said updated data received from each of said suppliers, and forwarded said updated information received from at least two of said suppliers for comparison by said buyer, said buyer comparing said updated information based on identical classes and attributes so as to provide a consistent basis for comparison between each special item available for purchase.

7. A procurement system as recited in claim 2, wherein suppliers are identified with specific predetermined relationships, said fulfillment organization comparing said special requisition prepared in accordance with said predetermined rules to select a plurality of said suppliers to receive and review said special requisition.

8. A procurement system as recited in claim 2, wherein said updated information related to the special item is normalized according to said predetermined rules and stored within said catalog database to uniquely identify the special item.

9. A procurement system as recited in claim 1, wherein said predetermined relationships include class, attribute and value characteristics.

10. A procurement system for purchasing a desired item, comprising:

a normalized catalog database, wherein each unique catalog item stored within said catalog database is identified with respect to class, attribute, and value relationships;

a knowledge base, said knowledge base including a set of predetermined rules used to convert free form catalog item information into said normalized catalog database in accordance with said relationships;

an item selection procedure, said procedure relying on said relationships to locate the desired item within said catalog database; and

an item specifying procedure, said procedure invoked when the desired item cannot be located within said catalog database.

11. A procurement system as recited in claim 10, wherein said item specifying procedure includes a structured requisition subsystem, said subsystem including:

a structured requisition, said requisition based on said relationships and at least one new class, attribute or value added to said relationships to uniquely identify the desired item that cannot be located within said catalog database.

12. A procurement system as recited in claim 11, wherein suppliers are identified by said relationships used to create said structured requisition, said structured requisition being automatically sent to said suppliers by said system.

13. A procurement system as recited in claim 11, wherein said structured requisition is used to develop at least one new predetermined rule for uniquely identifying the desired item that cannot be located within said catalog database.

14. A procurement system as recited in claim 13, wherein said new predetermined rule is added to said knowledge base to provide an update to said relationships.

15. A procurement system as recited in claim 14, wherein identifying information concerning the desired item is stored in said database in accordance with said relationships.

16. A procurement system as recited in claim 15, wherein the desired item becomes a catalog item available through said selection procedure after undergoing said specifying procedure.

17. A method for continuously updating a procurement system comprising the steps of:

establishing a normalized database of catalog items based on predetermined relationships;

determining rules to convert free form information associated with said catalog items into said normalized database;

processing a request for a special item not located within said catalog database using said predetermined relationships; and

specifying an additional relationship to uniquely identify the special item.

18. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein said predetermined relationships include class, attribute and value characteristics and said additional relationship is at least one class, attribute, or value.

19. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

updating said rules to incorporate said new class, attribute or value from said specifying step; and

adding the special item to said database using said updating of said rules.

20. A procurement system for ordering a special item comprising the steps of:

searching for an item within a database;

determining that said item is not within said database;

creating a structured requisition for said item;

transmitting said structured requisition to at least one potential supplier;

locating a desired supplier for said item; and

adding said item to said database.

21. A procurement system as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of normalizing said database such that said item is categorized in accordance with class, attribute, and value relationships.

22. A procurement system as recited in claim 20, wherein said creating step includes the step of identifying normalized relationships for said item.

23. A procurement system as recited in claim 22, wherein said transmitting step includes the step of automatically identifying said potential supplier using said normalized relationships.

24. A procurement system as recited in claim 22, wherein said locating step includes the step of updating said normalized relationships for creating a new ~~relationship uniquely identifying said item.~~

25. A procurement system as recited in claim 22, wherein said adding step includes using said new relationship.

26. A procurement system as recited in claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

including a knowledge base and free form item data;

adding said new relationship to said knowledge base;

processing said free form data through said knowledge base; and

updating said database.